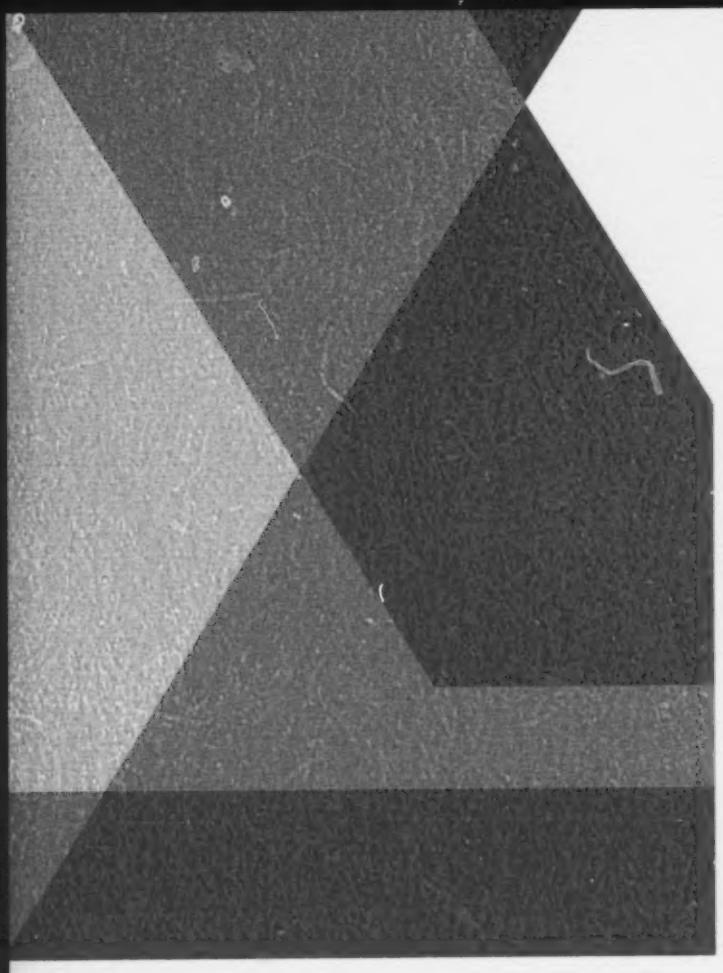

Business Plan

2018–19

Department of Labour
and Advanced Education

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2018–19: Business Plan
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

We are pleased to present the 2018-19 Business Plan for the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Our department's priorities range from post-secondary education and workplace safety to skills and learning and labour services.

LAE's top priority is to create a diverse and innovative workforce with a focus on fairness and safety. This includes ensuring Nova Scotians can learn, work and live in a creative and inclusive economy.

Over the next year, we will continue to focus on growing our workforce, connecting youth to learning and career opportunities and continually improving the overall health and safety of Nova Scotians. We will also continue to collaborate with the private sector to stimulate job growth and enhance skill development.

By aligning our department's initiatives with government's key priorities, we will:

- Continue to invest and expand strategic growth sectors, and create the environment to build a skilled workforce across the province.
- Collaborate across departments to strengthen the innovation agenda to spur economic growth, expand exports, and create jobs for young Nova Scotians.
- Expand and implement programs that connect even more young people from underrepresented groups to the workforce.
- Commit to safe and healthy workplaces, through our ongoing work related to labour standards, labour relations, worker's compensation, occupational health and safety, and technical safety.
- Continue to strengthen our partnerships with post-secondary institutions and work to maximize opportunities for young Nova Scotians.

We encourage you to visit novascotia.ca/lae to read our business plan and learn more about our department.

Original signed by

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Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Minister, Labour and Advanced Education

Original signed by

_____

Duff Montgomerie
Deputy Minister, Labour and Advanced Education

DEPARTMENT MANDATE

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) works to contribute to a competitive workforce by making strategic investments in people, programs, services and partnerships.

Vision

Our vision is to foster Nova Scotians' belief in a bigger future - knowing where the jobs are and will be, building the skills to access those jobs, and working to their highest potential in fair, equitable, safe, productive, and inclusive workplaces.

Mission

The Department of LAE will work to ensure all Nova Scotians believe their future is here, with each person confident in their abilities to prosper. We will do this by maximizing our capacity to have more people learning, more people working and working safely, and more sustainable businesses in our province.

Mandate

Our mandate is to provide a fair, equitable, safe, productive, and inclusive environment in which to learn, work, and live. The broad mandate of the department includes:

- Regulatory responsibility for occupational health and safety, technical safety, the Workers' Advisers Program, labour relations, and labour standards.
- Improving access among Nova Scotians to labour market information, employment and career planning services, work experiences and learning programs that support their labour market attachment and growth.
- Strategic action to align the needs of employees with those of employers to help all Nova Scotians prepare for, find, and keep employment while creating more productive workplaces.
- Providing opportunities for individuals to advance in the community, or in the workplace through adult learning, literacy and essential skills, and skills development programs.
- Work closely with post-secondary institutions and post-secondary students to ensure Nova Scotia provides a quality post-secondary education and training experience, that is accessible and affordable.

To deliver on this mandate in 2018-19, LAE will undertake the following actions:

- Expand the Graduate to Opportunity program and implement the Innovate to Opportunity program to connect even more recent post-secondary graduates to the workforce, including individuals from underrepresented groups through the diversity bonus offered under both programs.

- Continue to work with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Excellence to further reduce regulatory burden.
- Continue and strengthen the positive relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board within a renewed partnership framework.
- Continue to work across departments to strengthen and expand the innovation agenda.
- Continue to focus attention on start-up supports, such as the Nova Scotia Sandbox project, to spur economic growth and create jobs for young Nova Scotians.
- Continue and strengthen our partnership with Mitacs. Work with post-secondary institutions to maximize experimental learning opportunities for young Nova Scotians in the Private Sector such as creating research work placements through Mitacs.
- Continue to collaborate with the province's post-secondary institutions in achieving the One Nova Scotia Commission's ten-year targets.
- Continue the work to create Research Nova Scotia so that we can better coordinate provincial research efforts and leverage more Federal and private funds for research and development.
- Continue to take the lead on coordinating youth programming and supports that connect more young people, especially those from underrepresented groups, with jobs.
- Work collaboratively with the Minister and Ministerial Assistant on Youth to ensure a horizontal government approach.

NOVA SCOTIA APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA), established July 2014, is responsible for stewarding and operating a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led trades training and certification system. It is an agent of the Crown and has developed its own Business Plan for 2018-19. While the Agency is separate, its actions that align with the mandate for LAE and Youth are reflected in the department's Business Plan for this year. More information about the Agency can be found at www.nsapprenticeship.ca.

KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2018-19

LAE continues to align our efforts with clear and measurable investments in innovation, education, training, skills development, as well as investments in our youth. These investments will directly support the prosperity of the province, where people will find good, sustainable jobs and are empowered to create, expand and strengthen Nova Scotian businesses. This is the foundation for a bright future.

We are committed to working collaboratively across government, with our federal, provincial and municipal partners, as well as with our stakeholders in the private sector.

In 2018-19, LAE's Key Initiatives will advance the following outcomes:

- Safe and Healthy Workplaces
- Strong Systems to Support Workforce
- Educational Attainment
- Employment Attachment
- Population Growth
- Strategic Sector Growth – Research & Development
- Export Growth

Safe and Healthy Workplaces

LAE will demonstrate a commitment to health and safety in Nova Scotia workplaces by ensuring all workplaces have access to the services and resources they need to assist them in achieving safe and healthy workplaces. This will be achieved through the exercise of our regulatory mandates in the areas of technical and workplace safety and through the advancement of the following key priorities:

Provide Victims of Domestic Violence the Right to Take Time Off Work

LAE will introduce legislation to allow victims of domestic violence the ability to take leave from work; providing unpaid leave of up to 10 intermittent/continuous days and/or 16 continuous weeks. This leave will help ensure victims of domestic violence have the job protection and flexibility to take time away from work to deal with situations of domestic violence. This initiative also aligns with the larger strategy and action plan to prevent domestic violence being developed and led by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Support the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee

LAE will continue to collaborate with universities, the Nova Scotia Community College, students, community stakeholders, and other government departments to implement the comprehensive and strategic recommendations from the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee report, "*Changing the Culture of Acceptance: Recommendations to Address Sexual Violence on University Campuses*", which are intended to shift the culture on campuses and impact change.

LAE, with its collaborative partners, have begun work to convene a provincial sexual violence prevention committee. The key mandate of this committee is to develop common guidelines and reporting structures to be included in the development of new, or the revision of existing, sexual violence policies. This work will help to support each university in the development of institutional policies that are clear, comprehensive, and which reflect common elements. The committee will support universities with developing implementation plans, for their respective institutions and universities as a group.

Mental Health Supports for Post-Secondary Students

LAE will work with the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents, the Nova Scotia Community College and local experts on mental health to investigate the benefits of adding a suite of e-Mental Health solutions to the supports currently available to post-secondary students in the province. These tools could help increase mental health literacy amongst students and assist the universities and the NSCC increase mental health service capacity.

Provide Access to Benefits for Workers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act* introducing presumption regarding causation of PTSD will come into force October 26, 2018. The presumption will allow front-line and emergency response workers to avoid proving their PTSD was caused by an event or events in the workplace. It will focus on occupations with a high propensity to develop PTSD, reduce potential retraumatizing effects of presenting evidence, minimize delays, and streamline and clarify adjudication. LAE will be working in conjunction with the Workers' Compensation Board and stakeholders in the development of regulations.

Strong Systems to Support Workforce

LAE will identify opportunities for partnership, training and investment with business and industry to build adaptable, efficient, and effective planning processes and learning cultures that meet current workforce needs and the anticipated demands of the future. This outcome will be achieved by strengthening the partnerships and investing in the following key priorities:

Strengthen Relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board

Within a partnership framework established by a Memorandum of Understanding, signed in the summer of 2017, LAE and the Workers' Compensation Board will work closely and cooperatively to jointly plan and undertake collaborative activities in areas of mutual interest, such as injury prevention and communications initiatives to make Nova Scotia workplaces safer.

Advance the Workplace Safety Action Plan

LAE will continue to engage with partner departments and organizations in the process of advancing the 5-year Workplace Safety Action Plan for Health and Community Services. The purpose of the Action Plan is to address work-related injuries and illnesses among care providers working within the Health and Community Services sectors in Nova Scotia, with a focus on home care, long term care and community services.

Amendments to the Apprenticeship Act

In March 2018, government introduced amendments to the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act. These amendments will enhance the legitimacy of the enforcement program and create a suite of effective enforcement tools – including order power and administrative penalties to effectively enforce the compulsory certified trades. In addition, amendments to provide authority to register pre-apprentices within the system will provide information associated with pre-apprentices who are in college program. This authority will allow the Agency to adequately estimate labour market supply from pre-apprenticeship programs, support pre-apprentices as they begin their apprenticeship program, ensure pre-apprentices are automatically granted credit for their pre-apprenticeship programming and report on the success of the entire apprenticeship system. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency will draft Regulations by September 2018 in order to implement these changes.

Educational Attainment

LAE will ensure access to quality education and training by investing in the skills and knowledge needed to build the workforce now and in the future. LAE will advance this outcome though the work of the following key priorities:

Eliminate Tuition for Apprentices

To increase participation in the skilled trades, LAE will provide funding to remove tuition fees for apprentices taking their technical training. This continued investment will ensure training is affordable for apprentices to earn their certification, increase their earning potential and take advantage of opportunities here in the province.

Advance the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning Review

LAE will continue to advance the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning Review to design and implement a new program model with a delivery structure, policies, and common tools for assessment and data collection that support quality programming for adults across the province.

Employment Attachment

In an effort to achieve inclusive economic growth for Nova Scotia, LAE will build a more responsive system of learning and training through partnerships with businesses, labour, institutions, and service providers, to prepare and attach Nova Scotians to the labour market. This outcome will be advanced through the delivery of the following key priorities:

Implementation of the Federal-Provincial Labour Market Transfer Agreements (LMTAs)

The Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) has been amended to include additional flexibilities for both program and eligibility as well as additional funding over the next five years. A new Workforce Development Agreement (WDA) will provide additional program flexibility and funding with a renewed focus on those who are under-represented in the labour market.

LAE will work with stakeholders to maximize the benefits of the additional program flexibility and funding offered through the LMTAs while ensuring accountability through enhanced performance measurement and reporting.

Implementation of Nova Scotia Works

The transformed employment services system – Nova Scotia Works – was launched in September 2016. Implementation of the new system continues to be guided by three overarching goals:

1) client focused service delivery,
2) service excellence, and
3) maximum reach and access.

LAE will continue to work collaboratively with Nova Scotia Works employment service centres, the Nova Scotia Career Development Association, and the Centre of Excellence for Employment Innovation to: continuously monitor for ongoing improvement and innovation in service delivery; to increase employer outreach and engagement; and to establish system performance targets to ensure the system meets its goals.

Nova Scotia Works Digital Service Delivery Channel

Nova Scotia Works employment services centres help Nova Scotians understand, prepare for, and fill the needs of the province's job market. Nova Scotia Works also helps businesses recruit, manage and develop the talent they need to be more productive here at home and around the world. The Nova Scotia Works Digital Service Delivery Channel will enable users to engage in employment services on-line. LAE's primary focus in 2018-19 will be on the design and development of the digital channel, including the testing and introduction of initial services, with a further expansion of the available online services beyond 2018-19.

Strengthen Partnership with Mitacs

We will strengthen our partnership with the Mitacs Program, Canada's leading organization that links business and academia through unique research and training programs; attracting and retaining skilled talent to support the growth of the knowledge-based economy. LAE will invest in more placements for post-secondary students to gain valuable experiential learning opportunities, working with private sector organizations right here in Nova Scotia.

Expand the Graduate to Opportunity Program

The Graduate to Opportunity Program provides salary contributions to employers to offset the cost of hiring a recent graduate and assist post-secondary graduates in finding career opportunities in Nova Scotia. LAE will continue to invest in this program, creating more jobs opportunities in Nova Scotia, including a Diversity Bonus that provides additional funding to employers that provide career opportunities to under-represented groups, including: Aboriginal, racially visible and persons with disabilities, women in under-represented occupations, and international graduates.

Apprenticeship START Program

LAE will continue to invest in the Apprenticeship START program, which encourages employers to register, retain and support the completion of the apprenticeship journey. The program focuses on small to medium-sized businesses and organizations including not-for-profits, social enterprises and Joint Registration Agreement (JRA) holders that have business locations and jobs in Nova Scotia. The program has been designed to increase participation and completion by individuals who identify as Aboriginal, African Nova Scotian, persons with disabilities, and women in non-traditional trades, as well as apprenticeship training in rural Nova Scotia.

Connector Program

The current Connector program is connecting recent graduates, youth, newcomers and international students with well-established local community volunteers (Connectors) who help build professional networks, and secure meaningful employment. In 2018-19, LAE will build upon the success of this program through the development of a web based application to further expand the reach and access of the program for all Nova Scotians including youth. The department will also work with the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Valley and Eastern/Strait Regional Enterprise Networks (RENS) to develop proposals that will support the expansion of the current Connector program in two additional areas of the province.

Centre for Employment Innovation and NOW Program

The Centre of Employment Innovation (CEI) at St. Francis Xavier University was launched in 2016 with a mandate to provide leadership, foster best practices, conduct research and encourage collaboration in the development and delivery of employment services across Nova Scotia. CEI also oversees the New Opportunities for Work (NOW) program, which works to increase the labour

force participation, attachment, and integration of under-represented groups including First Nations, African Nova Scotians, racially visible persons, Nova Scotians on Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA), persons with a disability, and older workers (over 55 years of age). LAE will continue to partner with the CEI, including participation in the CEI Advisory Board, contributing input into research priorities and NOW program development evaluation and knowledge dissemination to leverage best practices learned and inform the policy and program design of existing, and future, labour market programs for Nova Scotians.

Support for Labour Mobility and Immigration

The Fair Registration Practices Act Review Office, the International Qualification Recognition funding program, and Recognition of Prior Learning funding program will continue to support fair labour mobility practices and immigration to Nova Scotia. This includes the development of programs and services that support fair registration practices as well as the recognition of prior learning for internationally trained individuals, so they may become licensed to practice and gain employment in the fields in which they are trained and educated.

Support the Co-op Education Incentive Program

Through our Co-op Education Incentive program, LAE will continue to provide wage assistance to private sector, government-funded, and non-profit organizations to create additional opportunities for career-related work experiences for university and community college co-operative students.

Transition Task Force Report Response

In partnership with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, a great amount of progress has been made to address five themes:

- Improving access to and quality of career decision-making information;
- Providing meaningful hands-on experience;
- Supporting transitions for youth with low marks or no high school diploma;
- Increasing post-secondary student retention and completion rates; and
- Matching programs to labour market needs.

Work will continue on each of the report's 15 recommendations.

Population Growth

As part of the Province's efforts to achieve inclusive economic growth for Nova Scotia, LAE will work towards retaining our youth, engaging underrepresented groups, repatriating skilled Atlantic Canadians, and attracting newcomers to better meet labour market demands. We will advance this outcome through the delivery of the following key priorities:

Lead Youth Horizontal Collaboration

A Corporate Youth Structure involving 13 provincial departments and offices has been put in place to support horizontal collaboration on youth. Senior Officials are actioning priority areas for 2018-19 to achieve greater results with focused joint efforts and resources. Through this horizontal approach, LAE will continue to lead the development of a youth mentorship network, a common youth engagement plan, and gain a better understanding of the barriers underrepresented youth in the workforce face and how to reduce those barriers. We will also explore how to better serve specific groups such as refugee youth and youth in the care of the province, and explore providing government work experience for vulnerable youth.

Support SHIFT Action Plan for an Aging Population

LAE will continue to work with our partners at the Department of Seniors to support *SHIFT: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population*; to recognize, value, and support the social economic contribution of older adults in Nova Scotia. These actions include educating and informing employers, conducting research, providing career practitioner training and assisting older workers in attaching to the workforce.

Support the Culture Action Plan

We will work with our partners at the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage to support the *Culture Action Plan*; to strengthen Nova Scotia's cultural sector, creative economy, healthy living, and diverse communities. These actions include enhancing opportunities for culture creators and producers to access export markets through training opportunities, exposure to markets outside Nova Scotia, and enabling collaboration within the culture community.

Implement an Awareness Framework for Temporary Foreign Workers, New Immigrants, Youth and New Employers

LAE will continue to advance an awareness framework, ensuring accessibility of information and awareness around minimum labour standards for temporary foreign workers, new immigrants, youth, and new employers. Awareness for new employers facilitates the establishment of businesses. Awareness for temporary foreign workers, new immigrants, and youth creates familiarity with labour standards in Nova Scotia, reducing vulnerability for these target groups.

Strategic Sector Growth – Research & Development

LAE will develop programs that are focused on growing research and development in Nova Scotia, to support innovation and inclusive economic growth. This outcome will be advanced through the delivery of the following key priorities:

Create Research Nova Scotia

In an effort to focus provincial research and funding on areas of greatest strategic importance and attract and retain high-quality researchers to Nova Scotia, LAE will combine the funding for the province's existing research bodies - the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF), the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust (NSRIT) and the Off-Shore Energy and Research Association (OERA) - into a single entity and create Research Nova Scotia (RNS). This new entity will facilitate strategic funding allocations to support provincial priorities, optimize provincial support for Nova Scotia-based proposals in national research funding competitions, and support research projects that offer strategic advantages and outcomes for the province through the management of the Research Opportunities Fund. RNS will work to attract and retain high-quality researchers to Nova Scotia and to identify funding partnerships. Scotia and to identify funding partnerships.

Maintain Nova Scotia's Nine Sandboxes

Nova Scotia Sandboxes are collaborative collision spaces hosted by universities and the Nova Scotia Community College. They bring together students, faculty, mentors and external advisors enabling students to explore entrepreneurship and, in some cases, take business and social enterprise concepts from ideation to actual execution. There are now nine sandboxes including a new Oceans Sandbox and a new NSCC – UsteA Sandbox in Southwest Nova Scotia. LAE will continue to invest in the Sandboxes.

Innovation Team

The Innovation Team was formed in 2015, as a collaborative partnership between Government and Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions to promote innovation and advance the OneNS Commission's goals. Due to the success of the Innovation Team's first round of projects, LAE will invest in a new round of projects, focused on supporting the Province's strategic priority of inclusive economic growth. Preliminary consultation with key Deputy Ministers, the 10 university presidents and the NSCC president led to the identification of the following potential areas of collaboration and project activity:

- Employment Attachment (Experiential Learning, Entrepreneurship, Research related jobs);
- Equity, Social Justice and Inclusion (Accessibility Legislation, Access for under-represented groups);
- Strategic Sector Growth (Health Innovation; Creative and Cultural Sector); and

- Population Growth (Recruitment and Retention of International Students; Demographic Analyses and Strategies to Recruit and Retain Marginalized populations).

Reduce Red Tape for Businesses

Building upon the department's positive relationship with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Excellence, LAE will continue to work with other provinces to pursue opportunities to mutually recognize and harmonize requirements in the areas of workplace and technical safety. Within the Atlantic region, requirements for certain types of workplace personal protection equipment and training will be mutually recognized. Harmonized licensing will be implemented among the Atlantic provinces for certain regulated trades, as work proceeds toward development of an Atlantic Technical Safety Act.

Sector Council Development

The Sector Councils help to support an industry-led approach to human resource development, attraction and retention, training. In particular, ensuring that small and medium-sized businesses in Nova Scotia have increased access to expertise, resources and support in human resources. As a result, sectors are able to address labour market challenges in a way that will make a long-term, positive, and quantifiable impact on industry. LAE will continue to support Sector Councils through the Nova Scotia Sector Council Program by developing reporting tools and best practices in workforce recruitment and retention, human resource planning and training.

Export Growth

As part of the Province's efforts to achieve inclusive economic growth for Nova Scotia, LAE will invest in innovative programs that are focused on opportunities for growing Nova Scotia's export market. This will be achieved through the advancement of the following key priorities:

Innovate to Opportunity Program

We will continue to invest in the Innovate to Opportunity program to encourage small and medium-sized businesses to invest in innovation by hiring, on a permanent basis, recent graduates with a Masters or PhD to focus on research and innovation that can be expected to advance export potential or enhance current export performance. The program provides wage incentives to employers over three years, to provide enough time for the new hire's efforts to have a meaningful impact on host company innovation.

Support Atlantic Growth Strategy

The Atlantic Premiers agree on the importance of federal-provincial collaboration to promote the interests of Atlantic Canadians. Working collaboratively with the Atlantic provinces and the Government of Canada, the Atlantic Growth Strategy has resulted in positive and concreate actions in several priority areas, including trade promotion, immigration, and tourism.

LAE is committed to continuing to work with the Federal government and the other Atlantic Canadian provinces to further implement the Atlantic Growth Strategy, with a focus on increasing investment in innovation capacity, international student retention in the Atlantic region, and becoming a national leader in exports.

DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES SUMMARY

($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2017-2018 Estimate ($000's)	2017-2018 Forecast ($000's)	2018-2019 Estimate ($000's)
Administration	803	808	802
Corporate Policy and Services	3,917	3,932	4,134
Safety	15,312	13,621	15,569
Labour Services	7,344	7,168	7,595
Skills and Learning	129,176	133,394	141,350
NS Apprenticeship Agency	17,822	16,766	17,988
Higher Education	58,643	60,131	57,515
School Cap Amortization	4,810	5,156	5,572
Community College Grants	138,324	138,324	138,848
Total – Departmental Expenses	376,151	379,300	389,373
Assistance to Universities	433,079	473,343	425,272
Total LAE and Assistance to Universities	**809,230**	**852,643**	**814,645**
Ordinary Recoveries	131,871	137,572	141,262
Ordinary Recoveries – ATU	31,408	28,321	20,217
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	266.2	251.1	266.2

Note:

For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1